

December 3, 2004

MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force
C/o The California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814
Attn: Melissa Miller-Henson
Via E-mail: Melissa@resources.ca.gov

RE: Stakeholder Involvement in the MLPA Initiative

Dear Chair Isenberg and Members of the MLPA Initiative Blue Ribbon Task Force

Thank you for the opportunity to provide suggestions and comments on promoting stakeholder involvement in the MLPA Initiative. Save Our Shores supports the Marine Life Protection Act as a visionary piece of legislation that provides the legal framework for ecosystem management based on the best available science and strong public support. I commend the Blue Ribbon Task Force, the Secretary of Resources, the Department of Fish and Game, the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation, and the Governor for your commitment to implementing the Marine Life Protection Act in a manner that is transparent and includes meaningful stakeholder involvement.

Worldwide our oceans are being systematically destroyed through over-exploitation, pollution, and habitat destruction. Their survival and our ability to continue benefiting from the goods and services our oceans provide will depend on our ability to implement a system of management that accounts for the complex interconnectedness of ecosystems. Save Our Shores realizes that Marine Protected Areas cannot solve all of the problems facing the oceans. They are, nevertheless, a useful tool in a comprehensive management regime that includes practical solutions to fishing, pollution, disease, and development in the coastal zone.

Policy makers involved with the MLPA will need to understand that this is not a 'black and white' process. It is complex with divisive issues and concerns. Like the ocean, the needs and players are dynamic, emotional, and often dramatic. Therefore, I urge the Task Force to hear and consider multiple perspectives throughout every stage of the process. Be proactive about learning what are the obstacles to communication and striving to schedule opportunities for public involvement that meet the needs of stakeholder groups.

Specifically, Save Our Shores suggests the following:

- Schedule Task Force meetings in the late afternoon, early evenings, and weekends when the workforce can attend;
- Schedule the meetings in the region so that interested individuals can participate with minimal travel;
- Provide a stipend for the fishing community and other self-employed individuals to attend meetings;
- Schedule meetings with broad groups of stakeholders - deliberately bring environmental groups, fishermen, divers, government officials, resource managers, etc. together to talk about a specific topic with the objective of finding common ground.
- Solicit the groups in advance for their questions and concerns about an issue and then discuss them as a group with opportunity for input on the same question from each different stakeholder group. The format for the meeting could be that of a workshop; i.e., participants could be divided into working tables/groups with Task Force members assigned to groups. The working group results could be

shared with entire assembly at the end of the day so that everyone leaves the session with a better understanding of the issue from several perspectives.

- Engage the non-profit community. Ensure that the organizations are linked to the MLPA Initiative website, and that we have accurate, timely information on meetings, meeting minutes, and action items. Save Our Shores and other organizations have regular outreach systems that are already in place and can be used to spread information widely and quickly.

Finally, take this as an opportunity to learn about our communities. To increase our understanding of our public trust resources and how we are using them. I urge you to weigh evenly all the concerns and to consider objectively the needs of the overall resource as a public trust that belongs to all. This is our chance to use that knowledge to make better decisions about the future of ocean governance and to be successful in leaving a legacy of healthy, productive oceans.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions, or if I may be more helpful to you. I can be reached at (831) 462-5660 x22.

I look forward to hearing from you and to working productively with the Task Force to see the vision of the MLPA fully implemented.

Warm regards,

Jane M. De Lay
Executive Director